

Applicants do not understand what specific feature of the claim it is that the Examiner finds not to be present in the drawing. Fig. 1 does, in fact, show spring 17 connected to damper 110 and reference mass 12. If the Examiner could be more specific about what is wrong with the drawing, Applicants will make the appropriate corrections.

Claim 1 has now been amended, however, and it is anticipated that the amendments that have been made to claim 1 will obviate the objection to the drawing.

The objection to the drawings should accordingly now be withdrawn.

In addition to withdrawing the present objection to the drawings, the Examiner is respectfully requested to indicate his approval of the drawing corrections proposed in Applicants' response dated August 9, 2001. Upon being advised of the Examiner's approval, Applicants will arrange for the submission of a corrected formal drawing.

Claims 1-5 and 8 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by Shtarkmann (U.S. 4,869,476).

The device claimed by Applicants is very different than anything that is taught or suggested in the Shtarkmann reference.

The difference between Applicants' device and that of the Shtarkmann reference is best illustrated by comparing Applicants' Fig. 1 to Shtarkmann's Fig. 1. From this it is plain that Applicants' damper is connected to the vibratory mass only, and is not connected to

both the vibratory mass and the reference mass at the same time. In Applicants' case, a damper is connected to the vibratory mass and a spring connected between the damper and the reference mass. The spring is not connected directly to the vibratory mass, and the damper is not connected directly to the reference mass. The spring mechanically communicates with the vibratory mass only through the damper.

By contrast, Shtarkmann's damper is disposed directly between the vibratory mass and the reference mass.

Moreover, there is nothing in the Shtarkmann reference that could ever suggest Applicants unique combinations of a damper and spring. Note that at col. 4, lines 61-62, Shtarkmann teaches that

"the spring 10 is connected between a part 12 and another part 14."

This teaching excludes any arrangement that would be anywhere near Applicants'.

Applicants claims have now been amended to more clearly recite this difference. No new matter or issues are presented, as the amended claim merely recites that which is shown in the original drawing.

The Shtarkmann reference cannot therefore be seen as anticipating or suggesting Applicants' novel device, and the rejection of claims 1-5 and 8 under 35 USC 102(b) should now be withdrawn.

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that Claims 1-8 are now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of said claims by the Examiner is respectfully requested, and the allowance thereof is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner not deem the present amendment and remarks to place the instant claims in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment Under Rule 116 be entered for the purpose of placing the prosecution record in better condition for appeal.

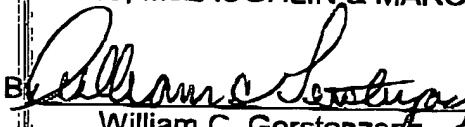
CONDITIONAL PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

If any extension of time for this response is required, applicants request that this be considered a petition therefor. Please charge the required petition fee to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

ADDITIONAL FEE

Please charge any insufficiency of fees, or credit any excess, to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

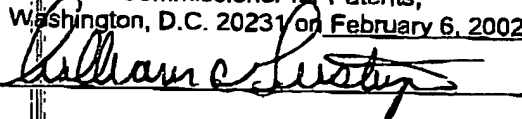
Respectfully submitted,
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted via facsimile addressed to BOX AF, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on February 6, 2002



Date February 6, 2002

**MARKED-UP COPY OF AMENDED CLAIM,
SHOWING CHANGES RELATIVE TO PREVIOUS VERSION**

Claim 1 (amended). Spring/mass vibratory force coupler with variable damping and variable spring stiffness for coupling masses to a reference mass [(12)], comprising at least a vibratory mass [(11)], a damper [(111)], and two springs [(17,18)]. wherein said damper is attached to said vibratory mass and one of said two springs is connected between said damper and said reference mass, [for connecting the vibratory mass (11) and the reference mass (12), of which at least one spring (18) can be optionally connected up, the spring (18) being connected up by means of a] said coupling element [(111)] being based on an electrorheological or magnetorheological fluid.